

Contemplative Fire Post

March 2016 – no.11

“Planning Our Route” Day, Box Moor Trust, Hemel Hempstead, Sat 12th March 2016

All decisions made on 12th March were recommendations to the Trustees. Agreement was recorded from a show of hands plus ballot paper votes. *(Full notes of the day have been circulated).*

a) Are you in favour of Contemplative Fire Ltd transforming itself into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation?

58 in favour, none against.

It was noted that the Office of Civil Society still had to put a final piece of legislation in place for the Associate structure to be taken forward, led by Bob Wilson, MP for Reading East. Jack McBane has written to his MP Nick Clegg about this and suggested other Companions might do the same. CF North is happy to take this work forward.

b) Are you in favour of maintaining the present Trefoil?

58 in favour, none against.

It was said that appreciation of the Trefoil had been enhanced by the consultation, undergirding our community and many personal journeys.



c) Are you in favour of maintaining the present Vision and Values with the additional clause: “All Companions to share responsibility for the Well Being (and Action) of Contemplative Fire”?

50 in favour, none against, 7 refer for further work.

d) Are you in favour of the revised Aims and Objects?

56 in favour, 1 against.

Add to “contemplative prayer” ...”contemplative living” ...

57 in favour, none against.



e) Are you in favour of the proposed new Responsibilities and Functions?

58 in favour, none against, 1 refer for further work.

f) Issues that emerged during the Review

Leadership, Finances, CIO Registration, Website, Communications, Needs of Local Groups, Teal culture

Are you in favour of establishing Companions’ Groups to help the trustees implement the proposals?

29 in favour, none against, one abstention (no ballot papers). Green forms were circulated for Companions to make an offer for 2016 with regard to the above *(sent by email)*.



Sharon Roberts and Jo Howard during a break – this is not a caption competition (sadly – Ed!)

Farewell thoughts from Sr Rosemary

Sr Rosemary said that seeds had been planted today and we should talk with Companions who weren't here – communication is the most difficult thing, especially in a dispersed community. She left us with three images:



What lights up? What do we treasure from today?



Is there a question? Treasure the questions.

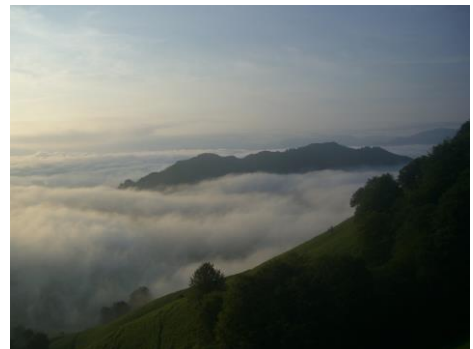


Where is the arrow pointing for me and for Contemplative Fire? What are the directions to follow up?



Tony Mealing writes:

Following the Saturday meeting I have been thinking - what is Contemplative Fire missing? What does it not have? Here I go back to principals - as a community, we are spread out and rather disjointed. For a "community" to function it needs members to hold hands and to communicate. You "might" do this at a higher level but that is not enough. Let us look back into the past, say Jesus came to town - where would he go first? The local pub, or a wedding, or a friend's house for a meal. What we are lacking is this level of socialising. This builds bonds between members, encourages prospective members to be invited and builds up commitment one to another and to the organisation. Do we do this? Might I make a suggestion? We invite each other into our homes, and not necessarily the members we would choose but, say, the ones we would not. I miss the retreats that Philip organised. These got us all together over a short period of time, but together.



On another tack, because I think to get together you need an end goal, looking at UK Pilgrim Walks, walkingworld.com, there are a number of one day pilgrim trails (or, if a bit too long, could be done by car) walked in three 10 mile stretches over three or four days:

"The Saints' Way stretches from Padstow (starting at St Petroc's church) to Fowey. The stunning 30-mile walk is well signed with Celtic cross markers. Cornwall Country Council (www.cornwall.gov.uk) provides a route guide. The website also gives details on St Michael's Way, another Cornish pilgrim route that makes for great walking."

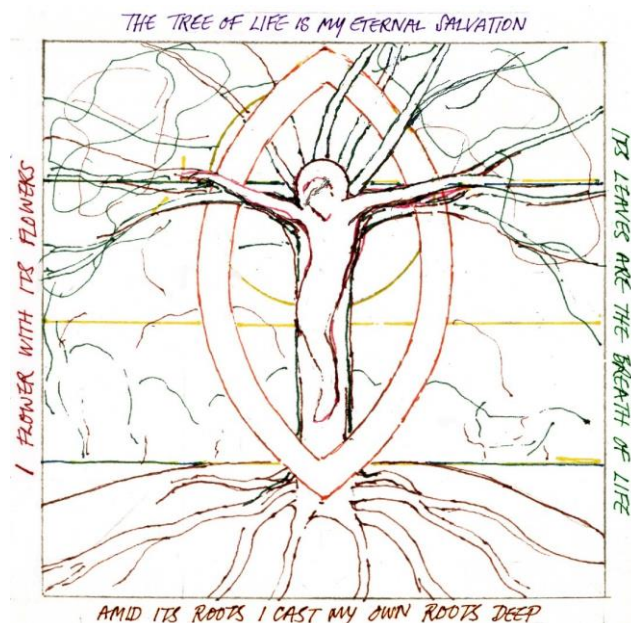
I feel we need to be together more and do something. The gatherings are fine for that quarterly day out, but I do not think it is enough.

Regards, Tony Mealing

Still Waters at St Albans – “Connection”

Helen Fitch-Hunter writes:

I facilitated a recent Still Waters at St Albans on the theme of “Connection”.



I had been particularly moved by Linden and Stephen’s Lenten Reflections in 2013 - I told them so at the time - which included a beautiful line drawing by Stephen of the Tree of Life. I used this evocative representation of Jesus on the Tree, tying it in with this St John Chrysostom quote:

“The tree is my eternal salvation. It is my nourishment and my banquet. Amidst its roots, I cast my own roots deep. Beneath its boughs I grow. Flying from the burning heat, I have set up my tent in its shadow and have found there a resting place, fresh with dew. I flower with its flowers. Its fruits bring perfect joy, fruits which have been preserved for me since time began, fruits which now I freely eat.

“This Tree is food, sweet food for my hunger and a fountain for my thirst; it is clothing for my nakedness; its leaves are the breath of life. If I fear God, this is my protection; if I stumble this is my staff; this is the prize for which I fight, the reward of my victory. This is my straight and narrow path; this is Jacob’s ladder, where angels go up and down, and where the Lord himself stands at the top.”

A pendant that I recently acquired was a beautiful example of the connecting circle and perennial creation.



The design linked with the circularity of the Celtic cross. As John O’Donohue says, *“The circle around the beams of the cross rescues the loneliness where the two lines of pain intersect and seems to calm and console their forsaken linearity.”*

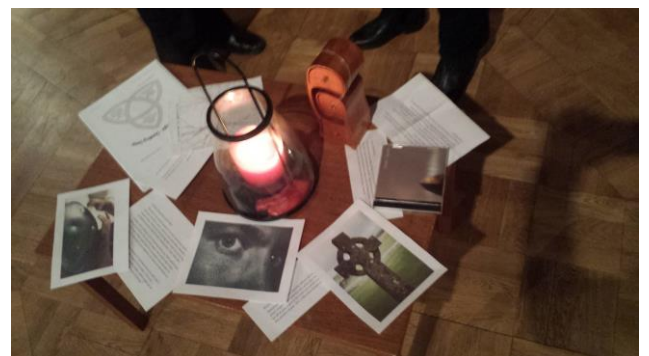
The Trefoil was also used as an image to show the connecting flow in to all parts of life.

The verse we focused on was taken from The Message translation of Matthew 18: *“When two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I’ll be there.”*

The music reflections used included a Taize form of *“Ubi caritas et amor, Ubi caritas Deus ibi est”*, (Where charity and love are, God is there) and Philip Roderick’s track *“Weaving”* from his hang drum CD *“Sheer Sound”*.

The varied elements of the reflection each emphasised our interconnectedness.

Several people attending the group said they appreciated the connection and provision made by Contemplative Fire.



Philip Roderick writes:

It has been a privilege over the months to interview some of CF's longest standing Companions and to learn something of what has encouraged and resourced them in their Contemplative Fire journey. To hear the recent conversations with Susan Blagden and Rob Husband, please follow the link:

<http://contemplativefire.org/media.html>

Contemplative Fire Easter Gathering at the Ark, Berkhamsted



Diane Rutter writes:

Thank you so much to everyone - especially to Sharon for celebrating our eucharist, and to Charlotte and Peter for opening up their home and providing us with bubbly for conviviality afterwards! Christ is risen - he is risen indeed - Alleluia!



Friends of Kianjai, Kenya Rehema Respite Centre

Sally Livsey writes:

I am writing to update you and thank all those who supported our Christmas 2015 appeal to support the work of our charity in Kenya and in particular the building and equipping of a disability workshop in our Rehema Centre in Kitheo. We have arrived at the total we needed and work is now completed on the workshop which is ready to receive its first team of furniture makers!



The workshop in the early stages....

Our Chair Caroline Newton and Trustees Elizabeth and Jonathan Gichaara and I will be going out to Kianjai and we are delighted to hear that the building is ready! We are taking an OT, Helen, who has trained in the APT (appropriate paper technology) method and we are very excited that these physiotherapy aids will be constructed and made on our own Rehema Centre land in the workshop. Joseph, who is part of the team in Kenya, has also been trained and we will be working together with him and his colleagues.

It is wonderful that you have been moved to assist us, pray for us and tell your friends and we are happy to confirm that 100% of the money you have sent, plus the gift aid, has gone towards making this project possible. We hope to publish photos of the workshop and families making furniture on our Facebook page and on our website www.friendsofkianjai.com.

Thank you once again on behalf of FKK.
Sally Livsey, Treasurer, Friends of Kianjai.

Registered Charity number 1143972

Lessons from a Hurricane - A Little Bit of Something



Remember when you got a little tiny bit of something in your shoe and you simply had to stop, sit down, take off your shoe and get this little thing out! Of course, we all have that happen. In the normal course of life, we do just that, clear out our shoe and keep on moving. Strange thing is, I can get a 'little bit of something' in my soul too. You know those niggling feelings, can be small to start, a bit irritating, but just won't go away? A tiny bit of something in your soul. When something like that comes, why don't I just sit down, undo my soul, shake out the intruder, hug my soul again and get on with life? Why do I allow that little irritant to linger?

Three months into my hurricane, I realized that there was an irritant that had grown within my soul and I was finally ready to shake it out. One week I was meditating on Colossians 3.12-17 and heard clearly that if I had a grudge or complaint against a brother or sister in Christ, I was to let it go and forgive them. I knew that I had allowed a complaint to grow within me and that was not acceptable. I needed to sit down, undo my soul, release the complaint and forgive someone. It was as simple as removing an unwanted stone from my shoe. There was no choice. Complaints, grudges, grievances have no more room in my life than stones do in my shoe.

It felt wonderful. My soul relaxed into ease. I could feel the winds of God blowing freely. There's no room for complaints, grudges and grievances in life. There is nothing to be gained.

Are you carrying any 'little bit of something' in your soul? Any complaints, grudges, grievances? Would you be able to release them and offer forgiveness? What would that feel like?

I hope it feels as good to you as it has for me.

Love and prayers on the journey,

Anne, Community Leader (Canada)

If you want to sign up to Anne's blog, go to:

Blog Name: Mystic in Motion

Blog URL: <http://mysticmotion.org>

Tom Hinds writes:

Walter Brueggemann's "*Chosen? Reading the Bible amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*".



I am looking for five Companions to read alone, to meet together, to share, explore and discuss this 80 page book. (I will lend you a copy of it).

Please contact Tom if you are interested on 01753 858 123.

RS Thomas

Susan Fogarty writes:

29th March is the anniversary of the birth of **RS Thomas**, poet and priest, vicar of Aberdaron for 11 years until 1978. Although retired from ministry 36 years ago, for some, the memory of him is still alive.

By chance, I was talking with a visitor on Sunday morning who remembers him. Now in her late 50's, the family have been coming to Aberdaron every year, for 40 years. She and her mother especially, used to love to hear him preach.

"He would stride through the village, in his long black cassock, tall and slim with that unmistakable unruly head of hair."

"I remember, he once gave a sermon on 'love and marriage', it made a great impression on me as a 16 year old girl!"

Over the weekend of **24th – 27th June we have our annual RS Thomas Literary Festival**. This year's theme is **A Convergence of Creativity**, looking at the influence that his wife, the respected artist **Elsi Eldridge**, had on his writing, how paintings influenced his poetry and how his poetry has inspired other artists.

To see the full programme go to:
www.rstthomaspoetry.co.uk

From **22nd – 26th September**, there is a *Journeying* retreat **'Walking in the Footsteps of RS Thomas'** in Aberdaron. With only 4 places left, for more information go to: **www.journeying.co.uk**.



Details of courses sent to Contemplative Fire

Ammerdown Courses 2016. The Ammerdown Centre is a well-established Christian Retreat and Conference Centre in Radstock, Somerset, open to people of all faiths and none, with a special emphasis on dialogue, reconciliation and renewal (*from their website*).



"In June we are looking forward to welcoming Margaret Silf to lead a weekend plus a 5 weekday retreat. The topic for the weekend is 'The Inn at the Crossroads' from **3rd to 5th June**:

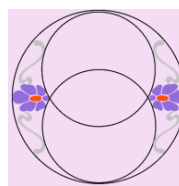
<http://ammerdown.org/The-Inn-at-the-Crossroads-2016> and the 5 weekday retreat topic from **6th to 10th June** is:
<http://ammerdown.org/A-Story-to-Live-by-A-Story-to-Die-for?>

This is followed by a weekend retreat **10th to 12th June** led by Jacqueline Evans: 'Alexander Technique and Centering Prayer'
<http://ammerdown.org/Alexander-Technique-and-Centering-Prayer-2016>

18th to 24th September we welcome Jill and Antonio Benet and Jacqueline Evans to lead a retreat on Centering Prayer – Finding Fulfilment
<http://ammerdown.org/Finding-Fulfilment-2016>

One final course for the present is with Kim Nataraja of WCCM, a weekend from **17th to 19th June** 'Exploring the Spiritual Path With Dante and His Divine Comedy'
<http://ammerdown.org/Exploring-the-Spiritual-Path-with-Dante-and-His-Divine-Comedy-2016>

For further information or to book a place please follow the links, email centre@ammerdown.org or ring 01761 433709."



CANA

Christians Awakening to New Awareness

CANA is about transformation and moving to a new awareness. It has its roots in Christianity and specifically in the first sign in the gospel according to John – the transformation of water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana (*from their website*):

<http://www.christiansawakening.org>

Wed 11th May The Perennial Philosophy and Christianity - Exploring the Interface between Christianity and Perennial Philosophy.

A day with William Meader, author of 'Shine Forth' and student of the body of works and teachings of Alice Bailey. Friends Meeting House, 42 St Giles, Oxford.

Sat 14th May. Marcus Borg: Finding God in the World- a Spiritual Revolution. Speaker: Diana Butler Bass. Birmingham. Hosted by Free to Believe, Modern Church, PCN Britain and St Marks CRC.

www.freetobelieve.org.uk/conferences.html
Friends Meeting House, 42 St Giles, Oxford.

Tues 6th – Thurs 8th Sept. Exploring New Insights of the Heart of Christianity.

Janice Dolley and Kate Porteus are facilitating a retreat at Holland House, Pershore.

Mon 26th - Thurs 29th Sept. Silence by the Sea Wisdom School. "It's not about knowing more, but about knowing with more of you... about increasing our capacity for spiritual perception from an awakened heart" Cynthia Bourgeault. Coordinators are *Don & Jayne MacGregor and Janet Lake*, all members of the Othona Community, Bridport, Dorset.

Anglican Religious Communities (ARC) is the group of Religious Communities within the C of E. It now includes Contemplative Fire as one of a small cluster of Acknowledged Communities. (It was this group that arranged the major conference in Whitby last May, with Contemplative Fire represented by Elaine Wilkins, Ali Dorey and Philip). Elaine has agreed to be the contact person.

WISDOM ON THE WAY

Saturday 14th May

The Barn, Waltham Place

'Hanging in God': The Blessed Jan van Ruusbroec, Theologian of the Mystery

Malcolm Peet

Jan van Ruusbroec was a fourteenth-century Flemish mystic who described the spiritual ascent up to a state of 'hanging in the essence of God'. He also warned against the dangers of false mysticism that was prevalent in his times as it is in ours. The session will provide an opportunity to explore the current relevance of Ruusbroec's writings on the pathways and pitfalls of spiritual progress.

Since retiring from clinical practice as a Consultant Psychiatrist, Malcolm has enjoyed having more time to pursue his interests in Christian mysticism and Zen Buddhism. He is a Companion of CF North.



Communication

From 1st March, the interim email address on the website for Contemplative Fire is:
Contemplativefire2016@gmail.com

Interim office phone numbers will be:
0114 230 7706 and 07896 342 907.

Please check any CF literature for old contact details.

Registered Office:
The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW